

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

**President Obama's Address at the UN Climate Summit** 1

**U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Calls for Action at Yale University** 1

**U.S. Center COP-20 Events** 1

**USFS Hosts Jordanian Tree Nursery Managers in Lebanon** 2

**Youth Engagement in Environmental Protection Workshop** 2

**Third Eco Cities of the Mediterranean Conference** 2

**U.S. Water Partnership Launches H2info Web-Portal** 3

**Embassy Tunisia Coastal Cleanup** 3

**Global Health Security Agenda: Getting Ahead of the Curve on Epidemic Threats** 3

**PEER Call for Pre-Proposal** 3

**Women in Science for October and November** 4

**Women Scientists Inspire Young Female Students at PSUT** 4

# U.S. Department of State Middle East and North Africa Environment, Science, Technology & Health Hub Newsletter

ISSUE 7

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## President Addresses the U.N. General Assembly at the Climate Summit

On September 23, at the Climate Change Summit, President Obama urged world leaders to take immediate action to introduce measures aimed at protecting the environment. Since President Obama came to office, the State Department has undertaken unprecedented investments towards minimizing waste at homes and buildings and is now harnessing three times as much electricity from the wind and 10 times as much from the sun on a national scale. Within a decade, cars will go twice as far on a gallon of gas, and already, every major automaker offers electric vehicles. These steps represents the U.S. commitment to helping communities build climate-resilient infrastructure. For the complete remarks watch the video: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/2014/09/23/president-obama-no-nation-immune-climate-change>

*"No Nation Is Immune" to Climate Change.*  
President Obama

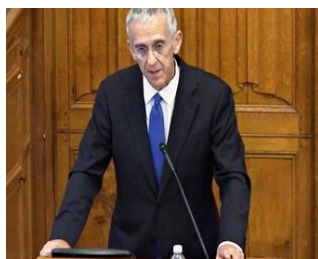
*United Nations General Assembly Climate Summit*

*Sept. 23, 2014*



President Obama at the UN Climate Summit. Photo courtesy of the White House

## U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Calls for Action at Yale University



Stern addressing students at Yale  
Photo courtesy of Inside Climate News

At an event hosted by the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies and Yale Law School on October 14, U.S. Special Envoy for Climate Change Todd Stern addressed domestic and international efforts to mitigate the threat of global climate change. Stern has led the United States in global climate talks since 2009. His speech comes just weeks before the 20th annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Lima, Peru, which aims to set a constructive course towards reaching a successful international climate agreement during 2015 climate conference in Paris. In his address, Stern reviewed the scope of the problem, pressed for the need to take immediate action and offered his assessment of how the U.S. sees the Paris agreement shaping up. For the complete remarks, please follow the link: <http://www.state.gov/s/climate/releases/2014/232962.htm>. We also encourage you to watch the climate action video prepared by Embassy Muscat: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8d1py5Xvb7w>

## U.S. Center COP-20 Events

The State Department will be setting up its annual U.S. Center at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of Parties in Lima. Multiple U. S. government agencies and non-government institutions partnered to organize a series of activities that will highlight key climate programs and scientific research underscoring strong actions taken by the U. S. domestically and internationally. This year the U.S. Center schedule (Some events will be web streamed live) will showcase many topics including: the Administration's Climate Action Plan, oceans issues, "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation Program", climate finance, and sharing science data. For the complete schedule please follow the link: [state.gov/cop20](http://state.gov/cop20)

## USFS Hosts Jordanian Tree Nursery Managers in Lebanon

Conserving green spaces in Jordan is incredibly important for the myriad ecosystem services they provide, including soil and water conservation. The U. S. Forest Service (USFS), through a partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture-Forestry Department, provides technical assistance to tree nursery managers in Jordan to help grow more vigorous tree seedlings that are better suited to survive once planted. Regional partners at the Lebanon Reforestation Initiative (LRI) have seen tremendous success working in local nurseries to promote greater survivability of native tree species in the field in Lebanon. LRI recently hosted seven natural resource professionals from Jordan, providing them with an opportunity to examine best practices related to nurseries and reforestation that can be applied to Jordan. The visit also promoted opportunities for regional collaboration and scientific exchange amongst countries with similar issues and ecosystems.



Participants at the workshop. Photo courtesy of USFS



Photo courtesy of USAID Jordan

## Youth Engagement in Environmental Protection Workshop

To continue its assistance in the nation-wide development of protected areas, U.S. Department of Interior's International Technical Assistance Program (DOI-ITAP) specialists helped carry out a workshop to encourage growth of environmental programs that engage young people. The Youth Engagement in Environment Protection Workshop was held November 12-14 at Ajloun Forest Reserve in the northern part of Jordan, in partnership with the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature and funded by U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Jordan. Participants included representatives from USAID, Petra National Trust, Petra Archaeological Park, Wadi Rum Protected Area, the Aqaba Special Economic Zone,

educators and students from areas around the reserve, as well as decision makers such as the Royal Environment Rangers. Representatives from the Ministries of Environment and Agriculture, and local NGOs. There were also representatives from major daily newspapers and websites. The workshop was led by American education experts Allison Ginn (Bureau of Land Management-DOI) and Robert Furhmann (National Parks Service - DOI) and involved panel discussions and informal activities.

## Jordan Hosts the Third Eco Cities of the Mediterranean Conference

Jordan hosted the Third Mediterranean Eco Cities Conference at the Dead Sea on October 19 – 20. Participants from around the world joined forces to discuss innovative city waste solutions; financing green projects; climate financing; public-private energy and water partnerships, and clean energy solutions. Sessions focused on answering the core questions of how cities can integrate small-scale decentralized waste solutions such as composting, anaerobic digestion, recycling, and waste-to-energy, into their strategies. Participants also discussed innovative urban water efficiency solutions and new building methods. During the conference participants attended small group events, such as Amman joining the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group. The U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) funded Jordan Competiveness Program (JCP) also signed two clean energy partnerships. The first, with the King Hussein Business Park (KHBP), will provide technical assistance to turn the park into a hub for innovative clean energy activities by the beginning of 2015. The second, with the Jordan Company for Development Zones (JDZ) will provide technical assistance and advice to support the company in putting together a comprehensive project to utilize clean energy and integrated solid waste management for the Dead Sea area.



Solid Waste Management panel. Photo courtesy of NEA ESTH Hub

## Launch of Green Jobs Arabia!

[GreenJobsArabia.com](http://GreenJobsArabia.com) is a collaborative effort between Jordan Green Building Council and online recruiting portal Bayt.com to create a regional one stop shop to search for, and find green sectors' skilled personnel in the Middle East and North Africa.





*Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli. Photo courtesy of the State Department.*

## The U.S. Water Partnership Launches H2info Web-Portal

On October 6, the U.S. Department of State hosted the launch of the U.S. Water Partnership's H2info (<http://www.h2info.us/>), an interactive online platform that will deliver global access to U.S. experiences, best practices, and lessons learned on water and sanitation issues from across the public and private sectors. During the event, Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment Catherine Novelli highlighted the power of information and technology in addressing global water challenges during her keynote speech. The event showcased interactive exhibits and hands-on demonstrations of water technologies and data application. Through the H2info portal, stakeholders can use the information to identify and

address shared water challenges, such as access to water and sanitation, agriculture and food security, and integrated water management, among other themes. H2info is powered by the U.S. Water Partnership, which seeks to mobilize U.S.-based knowledge, expertise, and resources to improve water security around the world – particularly in those countries most in need. Currently, the Partnership has 92 members. For more information about the U. S. Water Partnership, please visit [www.uswaterpartnership.org](http://www.uswaterpartnership.org).

## U. S. Embassy Tunisia Coastal Cleanup

U.S. Embassy Tunis organized a coastal cleanup event on October 19. Employees led by Ambassador Jacob Walles participated in a massive clean-up around the wetlands in front of the U.S. Embassy. Participants filled more than 15 bags of trash, and were proud to leave the environment cleaner for their neighbors and the local marine wildlife. The clean-up activity was conducted in coordination with the annual International Coastal Cleanup Day.



*Photo courtesy of Embassy Tunis.*

## Global Health Security Agenda: Getting Ahead of the Curve on Epidemic Threats

President Obama addressed leaders from the public health sector around the world at the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) meeting hosted by the White House on September 26. Through the GHSA, the United States seeks to accelerate progress toward a world safe and secure from infectious disease threats and to promote global health security as an international security priority. In 2014, countries developed 11 lines of effort in support of the GHSA – known as "Action Packages." The Action Packages are designed to outline tangible, measurable steps required to prevent outbreaks, detect threats in real time, and rapidly respond to infectious disease threats —whether naturally occurring, the result of laboratory accidents, or an act of bioterrorism. The Action Packages include specific targets and indicators that can be used as a basis to measure how national, regional, and global capacities are developed and maintained over the long-term. Since February, countries have made over 100 new commitments to implement the 11 Action Packages. For its part, the United States has committed to assist at least 30 countries over five years to achieve the objectives of the GHSA and has placed a priority for our actions on combating antibiotic resistant bacteria, to improve biosafety and biosecurity on a global basis, and preventing bioterrorism. [www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/security](http://www.cdc.gov/globalhealth/security). For the President's complete remarks please visit: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/26/remarks-president-global-health-security-agenda-summit>.

U.S. GLOBAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
LAB

With funding provided by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research (PEER) program invites developing country researchers to apply for funding for activities in partnership with collaborators supported by the National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and the Smithsonian Institution. Pre-proposals may be submitted by applicants based in any of 88 PEER-eligible countries worldwide on technical topics. The full PEER pre-proposal solicitation, instructions, eligible country lists and additional details on the special focus topics, a set of frequently asked questions, and a link to the online application website are available at [www.nationalacademies.org/peer](http://www.nationalacademies.org/peer). For further questions, please contact [peer@nas.edu](mailto:peer@nas.edu).



## Women in Science Hall of Fame Honoree in October: Dr. Rayan Al-Kalbani (Muscat)



As a female scientific entrepreneur, Al-Kalbani's passion for providing high-quality services to the Omani public and building capacity among young Omani graduates led her to establish her company, Mazoon Environmental & Technological Services LLC (METS). METS continues to be a successful emerging R&D and knowledge-based company in Oman that provides environmental biotechnological solutions and high-standard chemical and biological analytical services. Al-Kalbani, as co-founder and Executive Director, is an excellent example for all scientific entrepreneurs in Oman. METS received first place in Oman's "Big Business Idea Competition" in 2008, and first place in "Intilaaqah's Best Entrepreneur" in 2010. Rayan received her BSc in Chemistry in 2003 from Sultan Qaboos University, Oman, and MSc in Chemistry in 2005 from Freie Universität Berlin, Germany.

*Dr. Al-Kalbani. Photo courtesy of Embassy Muscat*

## Women in Science Hall of Fame Honoree in November: Dr. Wafa Hasan (Jerusalem)

Dr. Hasan obtained a BSc degree at An Najah University in Nablus in civil engineering, an MSc degree in Geo-Technical Engineering at the University of Durham in the U.K., and her PhD in Environment and Resources Management from Utah State University in 2007, where she helped develop tools to improve management of natural water resources. Dr. Hasan teaches courses at Palestinian Polytechnic University (PPU) on water-resource systems, water-resources management, hydrology, water quality and geographical information systems. She is the only female Palestinian assistant professor at PPU, and encourages female students to seek professional and personal opportunities on par with their male counterparts. Dr. Hasan is working on a project in the Hebron region that uses solar energy to treat waste water for irrigation to enhance the agricultural capabilities of Palestinian women engaged in small-scale farming.

*Dr. Hasan. Photo courtesy of Consulate Jerusalem*



## Women Scientists Inspire Young Female Students at PSUT



*Photo courtesy of NEA ESTH Hub*

Princess Sumaya University for Technology (PSUT) hosted an outreach event on November 4 at the School of Engineering where a number of young female students attended. The event is part of a series of talks PSUT is organizing under the Department of State funded Women in Science and Innovation initiative. During the event, Dr. Laila Abu Hassan, former Senator and Professor of Nanotechnology at the University of Jordan, spoke about the nanotechnology applications in Jordan and inspired students to pursue a career in research. Other guest speakers included Eng. Reem Hamdan, Assistant Director General for Regulation & Planning Affairs at Jordan's Electricity Distribution Company, who shared her professional experience as a woman engineer in a male-dominated sector and the challenges she had to face during her career. Both Dr. Abu Hassan and

Eng. Hamdan were Women in Science Hall of Fame honorees for the years 2014 and 2011 consecutively. Hub Specialist Yara Abu Laban also spoke to the students about the State Department's efforts to promote science diplomacy and support women in the Arab World, presenting the programs that the U.S. Embassy in Amman engages with public, including the Global Innovation for Science and Technology, TechGirls, TechWomen and the MENA Women in Science Hall of Fame. For more information on the Women in Science and Innovation initiative, follow the Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/WISPSUT>

**Interested in U.S. Environmental Businesses and Exports?**

**Check out this Department of Commerce link:**  
<http://export.gov/industry/environment/>  
**And visit the U.S. Embassy Web site in your MENA country.**

*This report is published by Hub Officer Elizabeth Hattingh and Hub Specialist Yara Abu Laban, with contributions from U.S. missions in the region.*

For more information about the ESTH Hubs and the State Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) please look up OES on [Facebook](#) and [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov).

*Photo credit: OES Facebook*